

As promised, House Republicans introduced an amendment Thursday on the House floor that would block funding for implementing the Federal Communications Commission's new network neutrality rules.

The amendment, which had yet to be voted at press time, was among hundreds being offered to the continuing resolution, which is the bill that keeps government funding flowing through September as a stop-gap measure given the failure to pass a long-term appropriations bill.

Rep. Greg Walden (R-Ore.), who introduced the amendment Thursday, said in his opening statement that the amendment was itself a stop-gap measure until a more permanent blocking maneuver could be implemented.

"I am bringing up this funds limitation today to prevent the FCC from spending funds to implement its network neutrality rules regulating the internet," he said. "It is a stop-gap measure while we work toward passing a more permanent solution, our resolution of disapproval, H.J. Res. 37, which would nullify the rules themselves. I encourage everyone who cares about the Internet to cosponsor that resolution."

Republicans who defended the amendment during about half an hour of floor debate, according to a Walden staffer, included Rep. Lee Terry (Neb.), Fred Upton (Mich.), Marsha Blackburn (Tenn.) and Steve Scalise (La.). Democrats rising in opposition included Henry Waxman, Ed Markey and Anna Eshoo.

All were essentially echoing the divide over the issue in evidence at an FCC oversight hearing on the rules Wednesday.

Rep. Ed Markey (D-Mass.) said during the floor debate that the Republicans were trying to give the Internet over to "broadband barons."

Markey said that those who voted for it "will see an inevitable decline in innovation, in investment, in the private sector, in the new products, the new technology, the new application, these new devices which are basically invented by hundreds and thousands of smaller companies in our country. That's the choice you have. Vote no on this amendment that shuts down the Internet."

A Walden staffer estimated a vote on the amendment could come sometime this evening (Feb. 17).

